

The stories behind the headlines

I'm starting to believe that a bad case of hemorrhoids or even a mild case of thyroids is preferable to being hooked on the tabloids, which I am and I cannot seem to help myself.

The Sun is by far my favorite. The Sun displays an uncommon sense of journalistic ethics, as evident by their back-page promise: YOU CAN LOSE 70 POUNDS IN 40 DAYS OR YOUR MONEY BACK!! as certified by Fat-Busters Inc., and guaranteed by a world-famous medical doctor who is repeatedly named in the article as, "This world famous medical doctor."

Unlike those other trash tabs,

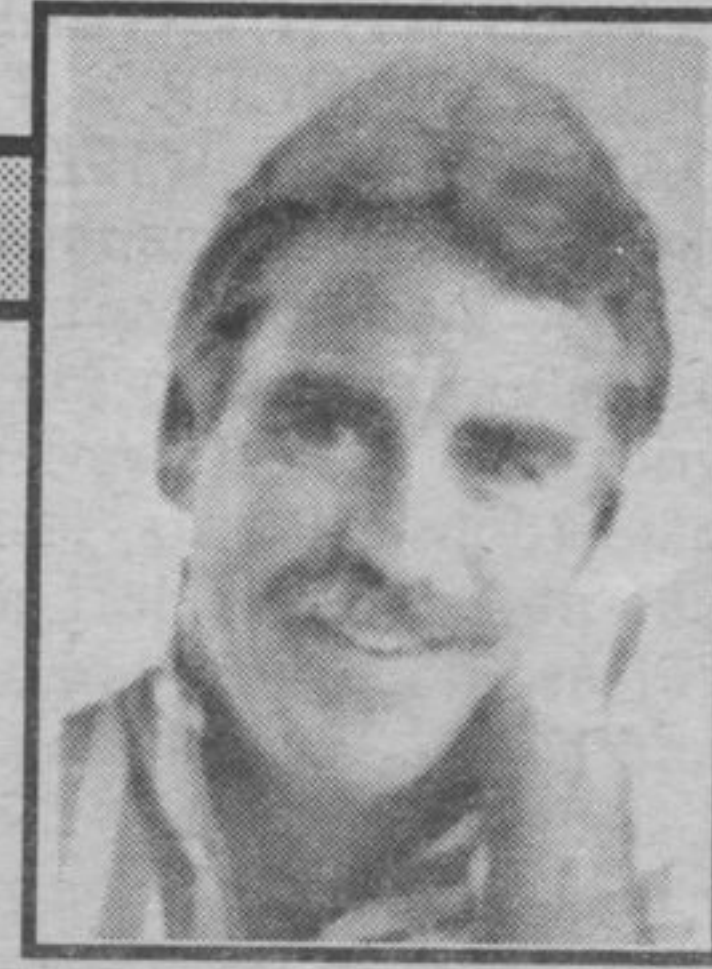
William J. Thomas

All The World's A Circus

The Sun would never print a headline like ELVIS ATE MY ALIEN LOVE INTEREST, unless they ran a supporting photograph of the grainy and slightly out-of-focus nothingness that was left over after Elvis burped and disappeared.

But even with The Sun, I'm always a little let down by the story behind the headline. For instance, the headline on last week's edition was: WOMAN

GIVES BIRTH AT BINGO GAME - AND KEEPS ON PLAYING. Well, that quite an event. I could almost hear the guy calling the numbers..."under the B-BINGO! an eight-pound bouncing baby boy...give the lucky lady a free card and this handsome, pearl-handled hunting knife to cut the umbilical cord." This is a great story and one to which everyone can relate. I don't know how many times I've



been down at the Golden Nugget, needing only O-65 to win the grand prize and praying the lady next to me would be distracted by natural childbirth so I could

switch cards and tear out her O-65 and paste it down on my card and scream BINGO! while doing high fives with the 800 POUND WOMAN ACROSS FROM ME ADMITS - WINK MARTINDALE LIVES IN MY BRA!

As I said, a great story on the surface but when I read the whole story, I was a bit disappointed. Yes, this woman gave birth to a boy (Vincent Anthony) during the jackpot round; yes, she won \$1400 after playing for one hour after she delivered, but as Dorothy Minello admitted later - "I was on a hot streak."

So, you see, as sensational as
continued on page 6

The perfect diet plan - poverty

Boy, have I ever got the perfect diet plan for you. It guarantees one hundred percent success and, before you know it, you'll be as slim as a slyph, trim as a sail, and able to see your shoes once more. And I'm giving it away for free.

For free, you say? Can't be much of a diet plan then. Nobody ever gave away anything worthwhile for free. Well, I'm giving this precious secret gratis because I know that nobody, but nobody, is going to buy the idea. It's really very simple. The perfect diet plan is - poverty.

Yep, you read me right. I said, poverty. Ever seen any fat poor people? When I say poor, I mean really and certainly no extra money whatever. And if you don't have any extra money to spend on unnecessary food, then

Olga Landiak

Life, According to Baba

you don't buy. And if you don't buy, you don't eat. And if you don't eat, you don't get fat. Simple? I'll tell the world.

Over-eating. That's the problem in this too-affluent country. Oh boy, how we eat! All over the place - on the streets and sidewalks, in movies, cars, plazas on bicycles, motorcycles, skate boards, while jogging, walking, running. Everywhere! And all on top of the 'three squares' being consumed in homes and restaurants.

Restaurants! I swear everytime I go into the Big City, I'm confronted by yet another new eating establishment which has

sprung up like a veritable mushroom since my last trek in. I guess they must all be making a profit or surely they would fold their little tents and steal away into the cold night of bankruptcy. But how can people afford the prices, and how can they eat as much as is served? Listen, if our dog 'Bomber' got to eat what is toted away in those 'doggie bags', he'd be big as a hippopotamus too.

If it ever wonders the bodies are ballooning out and people are rushing to the weight-reduction centres and spas crying, "Help, help, help!" Well, I guess that's



one answer if you like physical torture. Another can be the old horse-chestnut of 'pushing yourself away from the table three times a day'. Only trouble is, that push could shove you right over to the cupboard or the refrigerator.

No, no, no, the only real diet plan is a really restricted mone-

tary budget. Then there's absolutely no question of indulging in any extra food at any time.

Sound horrible? Not really. Not if you keep remembering those really poor people in the Third World. You know, the ones your mother always talked about when you balked at the spinach, beets and whatever. The ones who have to grub around in the garbage dumps of their countries to find something edible with which to stifle their hunger pangs.

Missing a meal or two and eating much, much less, is not going to bring about your immediate demise. Trust me. In fact, I promise you, you stick to my Poverty Diet Plan, and you'll be as slim and thin as any poor Third Worlder in no time at all. And you have my permission to pass this plan onto all your other, ahem, stout friends.

The whole truth about forests

Do you remember the old parable about the three blind men and the elephant? One man holds the elephant's tail, and announces, "It's a rope." Another has the trunk, and insists, "It's a snake." Another has his arms around a leg, and calls it a tree. The point of the parable is that because all three men are blind, they can't see the whole picture. A modern variation of the parable is told to journalism students. In the new version, there's a fourth person looking at the elephant - with eyes wide open and working - telling all three blind men they're wrong. That fourth person (sometimes called the "fourth estate") is journalism, fulfilling its highest calling - telling the public the whole picture.

There's an elephant living in northern Ontario - our forests. Like the old parable, everyone has a firm grasp on only one part of the creature, insisting they have the true picture. Just like the old parable, none of the forestry players will admit their vision might be a little restricted. This was painfully obvious in Fort Frances recently, at two days of hearings held by the Environmental Assessment Board. The Board is struggling with a monster called "a class environmental assessment of timber management." The hearings are over two years old, and will



NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders



likely lumber on for at least another year.

The Fort Frances hearing, like dozens of other "satellite" hearings the board is holding across the north, is supposed to take the board out from behind the stacks of documents (11 hundred exhibits, over 30,000 pages of transcripts) that have piled up in the formal hearings, held in Thunder Bay and Toronto. At the community level, the board is supposed to hear from the people who actually live and work with the trees.

But that's not what happened. Instead, the board heard from the same interest groups that have been presenting evidence and cross-examining witnesses at the formal hearings: timber and tree planting contractors, who insist that the forests are well-managed, and that the environmentalists are getting too much attention from the media; environmentalists who insist that timber management policies have to change radically,

to protect the world from imminent ecosystem collapse; and foresters, who claim the management system they've built up over the years needs to be reformed, but only a little bit. The foresters (in this case, two retired practitioners, Bruno Seppela and Don Start) told the board that the governments only look as far ahead as the next election, and corporations look only as far as the next stockholder's dividend, yet the forests need a long-term perspective, and long-term management strategies, lasting more than one generation.

That begs the question - who has the long-term perspective the forests need? Who has the whole picture of the elephant, instead of just a firm grasp on one body part? In the context of these hearings, it's supposedly the members of the Environmental Assessment Board, Anne Koven and Eli Martel. They're the ones listening to all the evidence, dispassionately sifting through all the evi-

dence, and coming up with a complete picture.

But Howard Hampton, the MPP for the Rainy River riding, suggested at the Fort Frances hearing that the board may not be in a position to do that. He said, "I've been getting all kinds of calls late at night, from people who work for the Boise mill in Fort Frances, from people who work on tree planting contracts, from employees of the Ministry of Natural Resources, and from logging contractors. They call me late at night because they're afraid for their jobs. They don't want to speak publicly. But they all tell me - you won't believe what's going on out there." Hampton tells his late-night callers to put their complaints in writing, with as many specifics as possible - dates, times, names, and places. He then gets this material in a plain brown envelope, with no return address. Only Hampton knows who it came from.

The perspective on the forest Hampton has developed from this clandestine evidence is completely different from the one the Board is hearing from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the industry representatives. Hampton says, "I think there's an incredible discrepancy between the official story that higher Ministry of Natural Resources official are telling, and what ground-level Ministry of Natural Resources contractors and technicians will tell you. But the fact that these people will not go public, obviously tells you they feel some concern over their own job, or their career advancement within either their logging company's bureaucracy or within the Ministry of Natural Resources bureaucracy." He called for "whistle-blower" legislation, to provide legal protection to someone who speaks out publicly about something their employer is up to that's not good for the environment, such as wasting wood in the bush, or illegally dumping toxic wastes.

Florence Buffington, from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, said the board should hold closed-door sessions, "to allow people on the front lines to tell you what's really going on out there." Robert Daiken, the president of the Ontario Public Service

continued on page 6